

VZCZCXRO2340
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DE RUEHNR #2525 1591430
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2313
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 002525

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/08/2026

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA: ENGAGEMENT WITH THE INTERNATIONALS

Classified By: A/PolCouns L. Peterson, Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) The Ambassador met with European Union ambassadors on June 2 and with members of the Somalia contact group on June 8 to share our thoughts on Somalia. At both events, he covered the following points:

- The ICU has clearly gained considerable ground. We do not consider the Union monolithic, recognize diversity within it, and accept that some elements may be positive. However, we also note that key fighters in the Union have a jihadist/Talibanist agenda and are responsible for sheltering East Africa Al Qaida cell members.

- Extremist elements in the ICU have been stockpiling weapons, training, and preparing for combat for more than a year.

- It is not clear which tendencies within the Union will prevail, or if the Union will even hold together. We cannot yet assess whether the Union will want, or be able, to cooperate with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

- It is absolutely essential that the international community act in unison and ensure we are all delivering a single message.

¶2. (C) At the meeting with the contact group, the Ambassador also raised a note of caution that initial message(s) from the ICU hardly mention the TFG. Thus, we must be very careful not to race to embrace Mogadishu's new rulers, as it may only reinforce a sense that they, not the government, are the new power to be reckoned with. We must balance our approaches carefully.

¶3. (C) Our diplomatic colleagues agreed with the above points. There was consensus on the need to support the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs). We advised that the U.S. is fully supportive of the TFIs, but we are concerned about the gap between the rhetoric of support and the actual prospects for doing so, given the great inherent TFG/TFI weaknesses. The Ambassadors also called for consideration of an appropriate role for civil society in our engagements. Some among the contact group were keen to see movement on a partial lifting of the arms embargo in order to help the TFG defend itself. UN SRSG Fall advised that this will depend first on appropriate action by the TFIs, which must include specific elements in the National Security and Stabilization Plan in order for it to address UN needs.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Our diplomatic partners in Nairobi clearly want USG participation on Somalia issues and look to us for insights and a degree of leadership on this issue. In spite

of a flurry of press items in recent weeks speculating on U.S. actions, they have offered no criticism of the U.S. role in Somalia. There is ample room for us to build these partnerships to work collectively on helping entities within Somalia bring about a degree of stability. END COMMENT.

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